COME HOLY SPIRIT

Prayers for Young People

Prayer is the most powerful instrument in the world, for it can move even the omnipotent God. But it must be prayer; it must spring from a need of God, with the knowledge, from bitter experience, that only He can provide the assistance needed.

Self must be excavated from the soul, and God Himself be lovingly welcomed therein. For love of God is that union with Him that truly seeks what it seeks, not for one's own sake, but for God's sake; that lifts the soul mightily upward and needs neither lips, nor tongue, nor speech to proclaim its inward thankfulness, praise, joy, peace, reverence, and filial homage.

The following prayers, composed by distinguished Prelates and Catholic Youth Leaders, are offered with the hope and trust that their thoughts will lift all the young people who use them mightily upward to that union with God that seeks Him alone.

pope paul VI on youth and love

". . . We salute Our sons in Christ, among whom We wish to mention especially the bold and generous young people, in whom rests sure hope for a better future . . ."

Pope Paul VI / First Public Address

". . . This is the genius of the apostolate: to know how to love . . .

". . . We will love our brothers, whether they be close or distant. We will love our fatherland, and we will love other fatherlands. We will love our friends, and we will love our enemies. We will love Catholics, and we will love Schismatics, Protestants, Anglicans, the indifferent, Moslems, pagans, atheists. We will love all social classes, but particularly those which have most need of help, of assistance, of betterment. We will love the very young and the very old, the poor and the sick. We will love those who mock us, who despise us, who stand in our way, who persecute us. We will love those who are worthy of love, and those who are unworthy. We will love those who fight against us: we do not want any man to be our enemy. We will love our times, our community, our technical skills, our art, our sport, our world. We will love, and we will try to understand, to have compassion, to think well of others, to serve them, to bear with them. We will love with the heart of Christ: 'Come to me, all you . . . ' (Mt. 11, 28). We will love with God's good measure: 'God so loved the world . . .' (John 3, 16)."

Second World Congress for the Lay Apostolate

pope john XXIII to youth

The Gospel and teen-agers

Teen-ager! Jesus Himself, the Divine Teacher, looked on this precious and wonderful age with special love. The subject of "Teen-agers" turns up again and again in the Gospel, each time with a slightly different lilt to it, as if it carried a new air and aroma with it that brought those pages to life and made them unforgettable.

At one moment, it is a call to complete generosity, as when Jesus invites the young man to leave everything to follow Him: and looks into his eyes and shows His affection for him: "Looking upon him, he loved him."[1]

Other times, it is a powerful command to rise, that snatches from death two who are in the flower of youth and restores them to life; and it is all the more moving to realize that two of the three commands to rise recorded in the Gospel are addressed—in almost identical words—to two youngsters. To the daughter of Jairus, Jesus says: "Talitha cumi," which means, "Girl, I say to thee, arise!"[2]; and to the son of the widow of Naim: "Young man, I say to thee, arise!"[3]

On another occasion, it is an invitation to share in His work, a kind of preview and foretaste of Catholic Action in its role of cooperating with the sacred Hierarchy: as a matter of fact, in the miracle of the multiplication of bread, it was a young boy who gave Our Lord the few loaves and the fish that were needed for His divine plan.[4]

Living for others

So you can see . . . what great love Our Lord has for those your age and what He expects from you. Oh, you

are well aware and firmly convinced, and even trying to make others your age understand, that our lives have not been given to us just to shut ourselves off from others out of selfishness or frivolousness, but rather to grow and spread out, to build, to do good.

This does not mean inertia, laziness, paralysis, but generosity and ardor. This is what Jesus expects from you and what His humble Vicar, the Pope, who is speaking to you asks of you.

A call to generosity

Jesus is inviting you to generosity every bit as much as He did the youngster in the Gospel; some of you may be called to higher ideals, to carrying out literally the words of the Gospel: "Go, sell whatever thou hast . . . come follow me."[5]

As a matter of fact, there is nothing more beautiful than a vocation to be a religious and a missionary. But there is a kind of generosity that He asks of everyone without exception: to leave the attitudes and the empty demands of the world behind so as to serve Him more closely, to know Him more deeply, to love Him and make Him loved more intensely. Of course, all this means sacrifice: but no one can outdo teen-agers like you in zeal and enthusiasm for following the Lord with a fervent heart, a clear mind, and a firm will, and setting no limits to your own generosity.

A call to life

Just as in the case of the teen-agers in the Gospel, Jesus is calling you to life: to the joy of living in grace, of knowing that you are the living temples of the Most Holy

Trinity that dwells in the souls of the just. A life of prayer, of confession and of spiritual direction; a life of Mass and of frequent Communion, with ever greater devotion; a life of loyalty to God's commandments, because this is the one condition for remaining united to the very font of life, Jesus the Savior, as the branches remain attached to the vine and thus bring forth in abundance their golden clusters of grapes.

A task for everyone

Just as with the teen-ager of the Gospel, Jesus calls you to work with Him: to offer your abilities, your efforts, your intelligence for the spread of His Kingdom. No one of you must think that this is still too much . . . Jesus fed the multitudes with five loaves and two fishes and He knows how to use your contribution to the apostolate, small as it may be, to work wonders. Each and every one of you must feel a holy desire to help Jesus, through your sharing in the work of the Catholic Hierarchy: putting into practice all that is asked of you . . . trying to sow the seed of good example in your own environments.

1. "Intuitus eum, dilexit eum."
2. Mark 5, 41
3. Luke 7, 14
4. Cf. John 6, 9
5. Mark 10, 21

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wisdom

Dear Lord, let us grow daily in wisdom, age, and grace. This was the Gospel formula for the young Christ. It must be the Gospel formula for us all. Christ grew till He stood a Man—obedient to God His Father, kind to all His people, one with His chosen apostles, as He was to be one always with those who choose Him for their Lord and their Guide. We are young people. We are eager for truth and justice. Let both prevail. We shall grow older. Let this growth be in faith, in charity, and in understanding until we shall all unite with Thee forever. Amen.

by: Most Reverend William O. Brady

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understanding

My Advocate Who counsels,
—my Paraclete Who comforts and encourages,
—eathly light is Your smile made visible in Your creation, evoking the song of the birds, the laughter of children, love and friendship, and the joy of living. I understand and I am pleased. You are the true Light, that enlightens every man that comes into the world. What earthly light is to the world, You are to my soul. I walk, neither in fear nor in darkness, nor estranged in ignorance from Divine life and light. I understand and I am grateful. Light not only illumines but also energizes—a source of life itself. You have said, "So let your light shine before men." I understand and I will try. Amen.

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counsel

O Lord and Lifegiver, enable me to understand the pattern of human life, in whose early years I now stand. Confirm in me a trust in Divine Providence which rules all things sweetly. By Thy gift of Counsel take away the limitations on my soul which make it timid and uncertain, and give me the strength to be constant and devoted in the cause of truth. Help me to be numbered among the merciful, as through the gift of Counsel I see the Divine pattern which gives meaning to human life. Illumine the sorrows of human existence in the light of Divine destiny, so that I shall accept disappointment and loss with a serene soul. Enlighten me to appreciate that no triumphs in this life are worthwhile unless they bring me closer to Thee Who, with the Father and the Son, livest and reignest for ever and ever. Amen.

by: His Eminence Richard Cardinal Cushing
Archbishop of Boston

knowledge

Come Holy Ghost, Giver of Light and Love, strengthen me in the knowledge of God our Father and Redeemer. Enlighten and sanctify me in my youth and throughout my life, so that through Christ in the Holy Eucharist I may know, love, and serve Thee in all things. Author of Wisdom and Holiness, give me the grace to know and overcome the temptations which befall me. Help me to teach those who do not know Thee, to shun those who speak falsely of Thee, and to aid those who preach Thy doctrine. Blessed Light of Life, instill in my heart a desire to know the Truth, to embrace it faithfully throughout my life, and in so doing enjoy peace in this world and everlasting happiness with Thee in Heaven. Amen.

fortitude

O Holy Spirit Who descended upon the twelve as they stood in anxiety, come unto me in my youthful endeavors. Banish from my heart all timidity and false pride; strengthen my soul to avoid all sin, to practice virtue, and to prefer ridicule to the denial of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let not the goodness of purity, obedience, and charity be obscured in the face of adversity. Instill in me the virtue of Fortitude so that I may courageously profess and practice my holy Catholic faith. Open my eyes, O Holy Spirit, that I may recognize my state in life. Give me the confidence to embrace it and the strength to live it as a son of God. I pray that Your guidance, protection, and consolation may be with me now and throughout my life. Amen.

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piety

Come, Holy Spirit, and make my mind and heart respond ever more readily to the Holy Will of the Father. Help me to recognize in the Son the one perfect model for my every human action. By Your special gift of Piety, enable me to accept fully every other virtue and to act courageously in accord with Your inspiration. Cause me always to remember, too, that in every hardship and pain You assist me with grace beyond my imagination. All-powerful Defender of my body and soul, grant that in the security of Your protection and love I may use all things for the glory of God the Father, Who with Our Lord Jesus Christ and You lives and reigns eternally. Amen.

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fear of the lord

As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.
For he knows how we are formed;
he remembers that we are dust.
Man's days are like those of grass;
like a flower of the field he blooms;
The wind sweeps over him and he is gone,
and his place knows him no more.
But the kindness of the Lord is from eternity to eternity
toward those who fear him,
and his justice toward children's children
Among those who keep his covenant
and remember to fulfill his precepts.

(Psalm 102)

a youth's offering

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I offer You my youth, vibrant, strong, and capable of so much good, so long as I am mindful that in all its beauty it belongs entirely to You. I offer You my thoughts, the blueprint of my future actions, that they will envision all things only in relation to You; my words, with the hope that they will draw other youth a little closer to You and never be the cause of my turning their gaze from You; my actions, that they may always be a symphony of purity, goodness, and charity, of which You, my God, will be justly proud. Keep my youthful body nestled within Your Sacred Heart and may the Divine Blood of Your own Heart course through my veins by the frequent reception of Holy Communion. Amen.

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meditations while offering the holy sacrifice

"The sacred liturgy is the sacerdotal action of Christ by which He, the incarnate Son of God, Who became our brother and wanted to be a creature in this very world He had created, glorifies the infinite majesty of God, adores, gives thanks, expiates, implores; and all this together with His mystical members, the faithful, who are grafted into Him through baptism and are admitted to share in His life. This priestly action of Christ, then, is performed in union with His Church, which with its great variety of organs and functions, constitutes His Mystical Body, where He lives and remains a source of supernatural life for all men, where He speaks, where He works, where He takes away sin, sanctifies souls, enlightens them

and leads them to eternal life. The liturgy is therefore the action of the community, where the whole Church meets; its vastness expands beyond the boundaries of the visible world, stretching out to the very heavens, having there an everlasting abode; it reaches also the beloved deceased who have died in Christ. All the Church is there in its perennial character, always the same through the centuries, like Christ Himself, its Head and its Life, yesterday, today, and for ever." (Cardinal Lercaro)

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First: Adoration

From the beginning of Mass until the Offertory, think of the majesty of God and your own nothingness. God's majesty is worthy of infinite honor and praise, but you are a poor, helpless being incapable of paying so great a homage; incapable, except through the Mass where you join your praise with that of Christ, Who can and does offer praise worthy of God's infinite majesty.

Second: Satisfaction

From the Offertory to the Consecration, call to mind your most grievous sins. Realize you must make satisfaction for these offenses. Realize that every serious sin against God is an offense without limit, worthy of a punishment without limit. How can you, finite, limited being that you are, repair an infinite damage? Of yourself, you cannot. But through the Sacrifice of the Mass, you can, where Christ offers in your name an infinite act of reparation. Being God, He can satisfy for your sins and the sins of the entire world.

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Third: Thanksgiving

From the Consecration to the Communion, think of the gifts and benefits that you have received from Almighty God—the gift of life itself, the gift of faith, and all the other gifts, both of nature and of grace. All you have is from God, so you should want to thank Him. How can you adequately thank God? You cannot, except through the Mass, where you can repay even to the last farthing, for you are presenting in thanksgiving a gift most precious, the body and blood of Christ. Christ has just given Himself to you. Give yourself—your joys, your sorrows, your successes, and your failures—to Christ.

Fourth: Petition

From Communion time to the end of Mass, humbly ask God for all your needs. "Ask and you shall receive." God will not reject the prayer of His Son, so ask through the Mass where Christ intercedes for you. Since He is God, ask for all you need: not just pardon of your sins, but the sins of the entire world; not the conversion of one person, but the conversion of all outside the faith; not the release of one soul, but of all souls in purgatory; pray for yourself, your parents, your brothers and sisters, and your friends.

1st Station: Jesus Is Condemned

Pilate feared man more than he feared God, and so allowed Christ to be crucified. Do I fear the opinion of the crowd more than the dictates of conscience?

2nd Station: Jesus Takes Up His Cross

Christ could have saved the world by one single breath, but He wanted to show us vividly the ugliness of sin. So He was scourged, crowned, and crucified.

3rd Station: Jesus Falls The First Time

Think of Christ in the dirt under His cross as He thinks of us, as He struggles to His feet to repair the damage done by your sins.

4th Station: Jesus Meets His Mother

Think of the faith and the courage of Mary, His mother and yours. Ask that she be with you when your cross is heavy.

5th Station: Simon Helps Jesus Carry His Cross

Simon, quite naturally, refused the cross. But when under it, he discovered that in the cross is life, peace, joy, and happiness.

6th Station: Veronica Wipes The Face Of Jesus

Veronica had the courage that Pilate lacked. She did not fear man's opinion, and so showed compassion for Christ. Veronica means the true image. Through my compassion for Christ suffering in the world today, may I, too, be a true reflection of His image.

7th Station: Jesus Falls A Second Time.

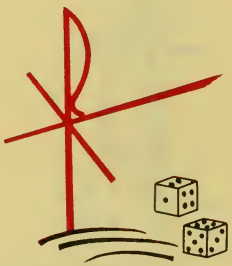
Think again of Christ in the dirt as He thinks of getting up for you, for your salvation.

8th Station: Jesus Consoles The Weeping Women

Christ is pointing to those in whom His suffering will go on, down through the ages. He is hungry in the Asians; judged illegally in the Africans; crucified in the Chinese. Do you feel for Christ and weep for Christ in those through whom He suffers today?

9th Station: Jesus Falls The Third Time

There will be falls from grace in your life. Think again of Christ in the dirt as He thinks of you, and so struggles to His feet for you.



10th Station: Jesus Is Stripped Of His Garments

The stripping of garments reminds me that nothing is left that is not sacrificed for me. Strip me, dear Lord, of myself and sin.

11th Station: Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross

Like Simon, I refused my cross. Nail me to mine, until I discover that in the cross is life, joy, peace, and happiness.

12th Station: Jesus Dies On The Cross

Jesus dies for love of me. May I die to myself every day I live, for love of Him.

13th Station: Jesus Is Taken Down From The Cross

May Mary, my mother, be with me now and at the hour of my death.

14th Station: Jesus Is Placed In The Tomb

Jesus is buried, only to rise glorious and immortal, as a pledge and guarantee that someday I, too, will rise from death, to eternal life with Him.

(Recite one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be To The Father, for the intentions of our Holy Father.)

confession

The Sacrament of Penance is a gift, an Easter present from Our Divine Saviour, presented on the day of His greatest triumph, His Resurrection. It is the Sacrament of resurrection and of peace—of resurrection from the fall from grace, of peace which follows our restoration in Christ. It should not be the ordeal that so many make of it. It should not be an ordeal because we are simply telling God what He already knows.

There is no confession without sincere sorrow and a genuine purpose of amendment. Our sorrow must include the thought of God—either God's punishment, and this is called imperfect, or God's holiness and goodness, and this is called perfect. Even outside of confession, God forgives any sin at once if our sorrow is perfect. A mortal sin, however, must be told in our next confession. To rise to perfect sorrow, meditate frequently on the Passion and death of Our Lord.

Tell your sins clearly, honestly, humbly and include why you commit them, and thus the priest will be able to help you in eradicating the cause.

Confess frequently, weekly if possible; it is one of the most efficacious means of leading you to a closer union with Christ.

our lady

Can you conceive of a child who does not love
his mother?
Or of a gentleman who does not honor
the lady of his dreams?
Or of a subject who does not pay homage
to his queen?
Mother, Lady, Queen of apostles,
the Virgin Mary is all of these.
Are you weak? Are you slipping? Do you weep?
Behold your mother!
Do you want to save the world?
You'll not do it without the Virgin!
Call upon her at all times.
Love her to the point of foolishness.
Call on her in your hour of need.
Entrust all of your cares to her.
She is a mother! She is your mother!

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our rosary

Summary of our Religion,
breviary of the faithful,
powerful weapon for vanquishing
the enemies of the Holy Roman Church,
the Marian devotion of the Holy Rosary
has been and always will be all of these.
The Pope has asked it insistently,
The Virgin herself came to Fatima
to sanctify it in the eyes of Christianity.
In order to renew habits which are perhaps
awaiting a vigorous impulse from you,
with manly devotion,
with the conviction of one who knows
its importance, its greatness, its power,
recite, each day, your Rosary.

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meditation

Don't you know the reason for all your stumbling,
Don't you know why you have doubts as you walk along the way of goodness?
Are you unaware of the reason for your being among those who join the poet in saying to the Lord: "Tomorrow we shall begin,"
so that tomorrow we may say the same thing over again?
The reason is that you do not know Jesus!
And because you don't know Him, you don't love Him.
If you really want to . . . Now is the time!
Pick up a book
Pick up your Gospel,
and make your meditation.

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to christ the king

CHRIST JESUS, I acknowledge Thee as Universal King;
All that has been made was created for Thee;
Exercise all Thy rights over me.
I renew my baptismal vows, renouncing Satan, his pomps, and his works;
I promise to live as a good Christian.
Especially do I pledge myself, by all means in my power, to bring about the triumph of the rights of God and of Thy Church.
To Thee do I proffer my poor services that all hearts may recognize Thee—their Ruler.
And thus may the Kingdom of Thy Peace be established throughout the whole world. Amen.

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a youth's meditation

Teach me, my Lord, to be gentle in all the events of life, in disappointments, in the thoughtlessness of others, in the insincerity of those on whom I relied.

Let me put myself aside, to think of the happiness of others, to hide my little pains and heartaches, so that I may be the only one to suffer from them.

Teach me to profit by the suffering that comes across my path. Let me so use it that it may mellow me, not harden nor embitter me; that it may make me patient, not irritable; that it may make me broad in my forgiveness, not narrow, haughty, and overbearing.

May no one be less good for having come within my influence. No one less pure, less true, less kind, less noble for having been a fellow-traveler in our journey toward Eternal Life.

As I go my rounds from one distraction to another, let me whisper, from time to time, a word linking me to the supernatural, full of power for good, and strong in its purpose of sanctity.

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a youth's prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, Who during the days of Thy Childhood became the Model of all young people, guide us along the path of youth. Fill us with the generosity to love others, the character to be truthful and honest, the discipline to obey our parents, the wisdom to know what is right and the courage to do it. Let us always use our influence to make others good. And never let us follow anyone who does not follow Thee. Amen.

by: His Eminence Francis Cardinal Spellman
Archbishop of New York

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meditation

Dear Jesus, teach me to love others, especially for Your sake. Make me see that I should never exclude anyone from my prayers or good deeds.

You gave such example of bravery, truthfulness, and honesty, especially during Your Passion; will You continue to help me try to imitate that example? You Who could not feel even the least resentment to the discipline of St. Joseph and Your Blessed Mother, will You constantly assist me to work toward this virtue?

Blind leaders of the blind, You once named those unworthy of leading. May I admire and imitate only those who pattern their lives after Yours.

prayer for youth

Dear Jesus,
I know I have a body;
Make me remember I have a soul,
And if that is lost, all is lost.

Dear Jesus,
You gave me the mystery of sex
As you gave me hunger.
Make me see that as food is for the sake of bodily life,
So sex is for family life and the Church.
Give me grace to keep my creative powers
Until you sanction their use in the Sacrament.

Dear Jesus,
There are moments when I love the world that crucified You.
Make me see that sin is not just the breaking of a law,
But the hurting of One I love.

Dear Jesus,
I cannot live without loving;
Neither can you.
My love is so deep it wants to be one with someone I love.
Thanks for Communion, in which I live in You and You in me.

Dear Jesus,
I too often think that if I love you,
I can love nothing else besides.
O Jesus, you are not a rival to what is good
Any more than the ray of sunlight is a rival to the sun.
So stop me from ever breaking one heart,
And let that heart be Thine.

by: Most Reverend Fulton J. Sheen

meditation

Reverent youth is aware of the presence and the majesty of God, his Creator. He sees himself as a blade of grass, of transitory moment. He is fully conscious that not too long ago he was not, and the world went on without him. So, like the youthful John, he leans on the God of all eternity, Who always was and Who always will be.

Reverent youth realizes that of himself he is nothing, that all he has comes from the loving hands of God. And so he finds himself on his knees—kneeling, seeking, asking for all his needs.

Reverent youth knows how insignificant he is—that in God and in God alone will he find all that he desires, and so he pleads with God for the gift of Himself.

It is such a reverent youth that becomes a loyal leader—not lost, not stumbling in the darkness, not undirected or misdirected. He is a true child of light, reflecting the reverence of Christ Himself, and attracting others as did Christ Himself.

Dear Lord, "You are the light of the world." Let my light shine forth that it may lead to You those who seek You.

prayer for vocations

SITIO—I THIRST for souls of youth, boys and girls, to serve as good priests, brothers, and nuns. I thirst also for the souls of other boys and girls with the courage to keep company purely and to serve Me in marriage as loving mothers and fathers, and I thirst for single souls to glorify Me.

Lord Jesus Christ, Savior of the World, Good Shepherd Whose Voice is heard by all who truly desire to serve Thee: grant that I, a youth, may hear Thy call and follow the Holy Spirit wherever He may go. Show me, O Lord, what state of life Thou dost intend for me, the religious life, marriage, or the single state. Show me where I can be most pleasing to the heavenly Father. Fill my soul with ardent love for my state in life and give me strength to serve Thee in it with all my heart. Grant that I may be numbered among the fruitful branches of that Mystical Vine, which is Thy own Body, our Holy Church. May the mighty intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother, obtain for me in my youth the grace to make a prudent choice and to persevere faithfully all my life. Amen.

by: Thomas Merton
Trappist

a litany for the young

God our heavenly Father, have mercy on us.

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, have mercy on us.

God the Holy Spirit, have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity, the One God who gives joy to youth, have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, hailed while still young as mother of the Eternal God, pray for us.

St. Joseph, guardian of the youthful Jesus, pray for us.

St. John, youngest and most beloved of the disciples, pray for us.

St. Tarcisius, St. Agnes, and all other youthful virgins, martyrs, and confessors in the Early Church, pray for us.

St. Joan of Arc, type of youthful piety and heroic virtue, pray for us.

Our Guardian Angels, standing before the Throne of God to win for us God's grace and power, pray for us.

All our brethren in Holy Mother the Church—Triumphant, Suffering, Militant—pray with us, pray for us—forever! Amen!

by: Most Reverend John J. Wright
Bishop of Pittsburgh

National Catholic Welfare Conference/
Washington, D.C.